

The Friend's Meeting House,  
Millville, Pennsylvania.

Record No.

HABS No. Pa.-21 8

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PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Ralph W. Lear, District Officer  
311-312 Dime Bank Building  
Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania.

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THE FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE

Millville, Columbia County, Pennsylvania.

Custodian

Committee, composed of former members  
of congregation.

Date of Erection

Begun in 1795, finished in 1796.

Present Condition

Fair, Kept in quite good repair.

Number of Stories

One story.

Materials of Construction

Plain brick building, with two porches  
tin roof, modern, plain, square-panel-  
led doors and casings, windows shuttered.  
Partition in center of interior, to sep-  
arate men's from women's side, is of wood.

Historical Material assembled by:

Mr. Fetterman, of Berwick, Pennsylvania

## THE FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE

Millville, Columbia County, Pennsylvania

The erection of the first Meeting House of the Fishing Creek Society of Friends was begun in 1795, and completed in 1796. From a copy of the actual minutes of the meetings of the Society, it is found that the first meeting was held in this first permanent building erected for that purpose on July 29, 1796.

The land upon which this first building was erected contained approximately two acres situated in a grove on the easterly edge of the town of Millville. The land was conveyed to the Society of Quakers by an indenture made the 28th day of August, 1794 by John Eves, the elder, a miller of the Township of Fishing Creek, County of Northumberland, and John Kester, Thomas Eves, Paul Kester, and Jesse Haines, Trustees of the Society of Friends of Fishing Creek Township. It was made for a term of 999 years and for the sole and only use, benefit, and behoof of a religious society of people called Quakers, especially such of them as resided or might later reside in or near the Township of Fishing Creek, and to and for such uses, interests, and purposes as the Monthly Meeting of said society. A yearly rent of one peppercorn is due the 28th day of the 8th month in each respective year should the same be lawfully demanded. This land was probably part of the land warranted to William and Elizabeth McMean with their warrant to the site of the town of Millville in 1769.

The original Society of Friends of Fishing Creek Township the first religious body in order of time in the township, had been granted an indulgence of holding services at Millville by the Exeter (Berks County) monthly meeting. From a copy of the actual minutes of meetings held by the Fishing Creek Friends it is found that the Millville Society changed their name to the Fishing Creek Monthly Meeting of Friends held at Millville as early as 1830, but this name was not accepted by the Philadelphia Quarterly until 1856.

The original meeting house had a partition in the center to form individual places of worship for the men and women of the society and in 1798, two years after completion, we find Elizabeth Eves giving instruction to the children of the vicinity in one end of the building, thus beginning the oldest school in the township.

In 1846, the present meeting house was erected on the old site and, from the minutes, the cost reported on December 23, 1846, was \$1250.00, work not completed. The carpenters were John W. Eves, Wilson M. Eves, Benjamin K. Eves, and Uriah Miller. The two center posts were turned by Amos K. Heacock in the Millville Wagon Works of Charles Eves, manufacturer of wagon parts. John Biggett and his brother James were the plasterers. The building, made of brick is about 40x70 feet and is built similar to all plain brick edifices of Quaker usage of the nineteenth century. On one side is a Quaker burying ground. There are two porches on the present building. The main porch has slender, graceful columns, supporting the roof, which is of tin, and is modern. There are shutters on all the windows on all sides of the building, doors and casing are plain and square panelled. As you enter, you are impressed with the plain, old-fashioned, unpainted woodwork of the interior. The straight backed pews are unpainted, made from smooth but unselected lumber. The interior is divided into two sections, by a partition, part of which is made of plain wooden panels that are movable and thus making the assembly all one. The one room has been used by the women for business meetings while the men had their meeting. The same room has been used for funerals. The main room as you enter, is the place where regular, weekly meeting are held. This has two wooden pillars, also unpainted, about 12" in diameter, turned, except the top and bottom. They have deep checks from age and the dryness of the interior.

Two common "egg" stoves give heat to the worshippers. One portion of the pews have been set aside for the minister and the elders, while the rest is for the membership. The floor is now carpeted with ingrain carpet.

In the burying ground, most of the persons buried are the descendants of John Eves who had twelve sons. A Carlisle Indian student is buried here also.

Since 1795, it does not appear that the Fishing Creek Friends have deviated from an established regularity in their appointments for religious services. These appointments have been attended and supported during this period by successive generations of the families by whom they were begun. A record of this character, unbroken for almost a century and a half cannot be claimed by any other religious organization in this part of the State of Pennsylvania.

Author

Approved

Reviewed Aug. 19. 1936 - (W)

Betty L. Manning  
Ralph H. H. Dear  
May 1936